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Book Reviews

Criticism Editors

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The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost by John F. Lynen. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960. Pp. xii + 208. $4.50.

The last book on Frost before this one told us explicitly that we must read the poet's heart before we can read his poems. It would seem to follow that, since the poet's heart has dwelt both in and on New England, we ought to know something of that subject too before we read the poems. But now Mr. Lynen tells us that the key that will unlock Frost's work for us consists in seeing it as a version of that least confessional and realistic, that most artful and even artificial of forms, the pastoral. Frost should be read neither as sage nor as realist, but as myth-maker. Like the rustic swains of pastoral tradition, Frost's New England can hardly be said to exist at all, or indeed ever to have existed. It is "not New England itself" but "a symbolic picture . . . a pastoral myth, a new version of Arcadia." The picture was created to serve as a meaningful contrast with urban complexity. Pastoralism is a technique of discovering meaning through this contrast.

Thus Mr. Lynen relieves us both of the embarrassment of having to try to be mind-readers, or rather heart-readers, and of the labor of trying to get to know something of the language and life of back-country New England—if we don't know the region first-hand. With New England as it appears in the poems reduced to an Arcadian myth, we can stop talking about life, Frost's and New England's, and turn to the poems themselves, which are by no means transparent and which have had all too little critical study.

Fine, we think. Frost's work is certainly art, not life, a complex symbolic structure, not an uncreative imitation or a mere statement of the opinions that comprise his much-admired wisdom. We find ourselves agreeing immediately with Mr. Lynen that we have had enough and more than enough studies of the man, and the man in relation to the region, and all too few helpful ones of the poems. Surely if Frost's work is to live on into the coming generations it will have to be intelligible and relevant to those who not only have never seen a meadow mowed with a scythe but don't know a scythe from a sickle—or a meadow from a pasture. Mr. Lynen must somehow be on the right track, we think.

He is, but he has overstated his case, especially in his early presentation of it. His own stance is too much determined by his reaction to the anecdotal historicism and impressionistic environmental studies that make up so much of the existing body of writing on Frost. His thesis, when trimmed down to the size it effectively has by the end of the book, that is, that the pastoral tradition has been a powerful influence on Frost's work and that some of his poems are best read as pastorals, is valid enough, and helpful, and fresh. The necessary concessions to aspects of the work to which the concept of pastoral is not relevant nearly all get made finally in passing, somewhere. But by then it is too

late. The quarrelsome marginal comments have already been scribbled, and the reader's confidence in Mr. Lynen's judgment has been too deeply shaken to be wholly revived. Here are some of my marginal objections. I should not bother to record them if the book had less value despite its defects, if it were not so clearly an understandably excessive reaction against an even less defensible position.

The "mythical" nature of Frost's New England. The life pictured in Frost's early poems may look mythical from the vantage point of New Haven in the fifties, but it was the life Frost knew and that may still, in part, be known in unprogressive, not yet either industrialized or deserted, places north of Boston. True, this life can and does inspire nostalgia and idealization in the forcibly urbanized: the pastoral motif. But Mr. Lynen seems to forget Frost's age, and the changes that have occurred in the last half century. What was history, and is in part still living history, becomes myth too easily and quickly in this treatment. Mr. Lynen tells us that Frost's New England cannot be taken to be the "real" New England (thus echoing, probably without intending to, Frost's negative critics in the twenties and thirties: escapism, lack of social relevance), since the real New England is urban and industrial and populated by non-Yankees. But to approach the question of the "reality" or "mythical" nature of Frost's New England from Mr. Lynen's strictly contemporary and urban point of view is, I think, to miss a part of the point. Frost records (of course that isn't *all* he does) a culture that once, at least, could be called "New England," and to some extent, in parts of the region, still can be. The suburbs of Boston and Hartford are just like the suburbs of New Jersey and Illinois, but Frost has not written about suburban life. Neither Rochester, Vermont, nor Wellesley, Massachusetts, is a "myth," but Rochester preserves much more of New England's past and so of its distinctive character. The forces of cultural homogenizing have not gone so far there. To know it is to find certain aspects of Frost's poetry less obscure.

The artful quality of Frost's work, the masks and poses. Of course, any artist is artful. He is not likely, in these days at least, to think of himself, nor are we likely to think of him, as simply recording: he creates. But let's not completely lose our historical sense. Frost began to write at the height of the realistic movement, which did not then seem naive, and the reigning ideal affected him and his work as it did Robinson and *his* work, and probably more profoundly. "The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows." Frost *meant* that. He meant it as man (his philosophy) and he meant it as artist (his aesthetic). We must not take it as simply dramatic, significant solely in context. Rather, it is a part of a credo that it is necessary to understand if one is fully to understand Frost's work. A *fact* in Frost's world is not something one just dreams up. It has to be solid, and experienced as solid, before it can become a symbol.

The universal, as contrasted with the regional, character of Frost's work. It is of course a sign of the greatness of Frost that his poetry at its best rises to the universal. But it does so not just in the way Mr. Lynen points out, by contrasting a simple pastoral world in which the relation between means and ends may be clearly seen with a confusing, and perhaps confused, urban world that is too much with us, but also by exploring the metaphorical implications of its

own world taken as complete, taken as *the* world. The New England Frost writes about is for him, and becomes for the sympathetic reader, a concrete universal, very concrete and therefore all the more universal. Not only the matter but the manner are recognizably regional, the tone, the attitudes, even at times the diction. (Mr. Lynen recognizes this aspect of Frost but attributes it to a deliberately adopted pose created to fit in with the Arcadian myth. I doubt it, but evidence on such a matter is not likely to be decisive. How much does Frost himself know about his own motives?) In all his poems, by no means just in the pastoral ones, Frost speaks as a New Englander. No dialect writer, he still uses not just a tone but even words that I find my students from other parts of the country, and especially from the large cities of other parts of the country, sometimes have trouble with. The reader who does not know what *town* still signifies north of Boston will misread some passages in Frost. (It does *not* mean "village" or "small city" or even "settlement"; some back-country towns have no settlements.) Not to know what *steeplebush* means, what the lovely pest is, is to miss a part of the meaning of the volume that has that word as its title. Again, on a different level, Frost's affinity with Emerson, and even, less obviously, with Whittier and Emily Dickinson, are at least as significant as his ties with the pastoral tradition. Frost is a regional poet—which does not mean that he is naive or rustic.

As a result both of pushing his thesis too hard and of either not knowing about, or not thinking it important to pay attention to, the *life* Frost writes about, Mr. Lynen sometimes misreads the poems. His reading of "The Pasture" may serve as an example. We are told of this little poem Frost uses to introduce his collected volumes that "The contrast between the country and the town which we have noted in pastoral is clearly the essential element in the design of this poem." Not at all: not, at least, "clearly," and not "the essential element." Overjoyed at finding his pastoral design everywhere, even in a poem Frost seems to want us to find suggestive of the essential strategy and meaning of his work, and perhaps not having seen enough calves born or cleaned the leaves and muck out of enough springs, Mr. Lynen seizes upon a minor point and misses the major one. Not to indulge in a complete reading, which would have to be long, for the poem is very suggestive: there are two acts of "cleaning up" of nature in the poem, two acts that bring order out of mess or clarity out of murkiness. The poem expresses Frost's "humanism," his preference for "form" in poetry, his disdain for free verse, his rejection of any form of simple "naturalism." The essential contrast in the poem is not between city and country but between man and nature. Frost said long ago that he prefers his potatoes with the dirt washed off. The poem says something about Frost's conception of art and something about his conception of life.

One more general objection and I shall be through recording my marginal quarrels with Mr. Lynen. He writes as though he were younger than I thought it possible for a doctoral candidate to be, or to seem to be, even in a doctoral thesis, as this is. He seems always just to have discovered what has been known for quite a long time. Sometimes indeed he has not yet quite come to the point of discovering what has always been known: "He [Frost] is, in many respects, a pessimist and seems to believe that sorrow is an inevitable part of

human experience." Well. How is one to deal with a critic who can write such a sentence? If he has not yet discovered the inevitability of grief, sorrow—for the person human enough, sensitive enough, to be capable of it—then can he have felt the impact of the poems?

A general critical study of Frost's poetry has been needed, and still is. Yet, though this book does not fill that need, it has real value. Its thesis is valid when properly qualified, though it didn't need a whole book to make the point. Many of the readings of specific poems are good, a number of them in fact being the best I know of in print—"New Hampshire," "The Grindstone," "Fire and Ice," "The Code," "The Woodpile." Finally, when Mr. Lynen forgets his thesis and simply discusses Frost in general, he is usually sound. He is sympathetic without adulation, ready to take Frost seriously without setting him up as an infallible sage, predisposed to look for the artful within or behind the apparently simple or merely sincere. Frost is, I think, just as good an artist as Mr. Lynen argues, and just as "modern" in his themes; and Mr. Lynen is certainly right in distinguishing him from nineteenth century nature poets—though some of us at least have never been tempted to confuse him with them.

With all its defects, then, and some of them seem to me fairly serious, the book makes a significant contribution to Frost criticism. Perhaps the shortest way to express my very mixed reaction is to say that it is good enough to make me wish strongly that it were better. It is not the sort of book that just doesn't matter. It will have to be taken account of by Frostians.

HYATT H. WAGGONER

Brown University

Theme and Structure in Swift's "Tale of a Tub" by Ronald Paulson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960. Pp. xiv + 259. $4.50.

Smollett and the Scottish School by M. A. Goldberg. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959. Pp. xiii + 191. $3.00.

The roster of commentators and scholars of the works of Swift—from Justus Van Effen to Martin Price—although long, formidable and illustrious, is not yet exhausted. Add to it now Ronald Paulson, who provides a close reading of *A Tale of a Tub* to make clear what it is and what it means. Its basic structure, Mr. Paulson asserts, is "the juxtaposition of the real and the ideal, the world of men and the world of the imagination," and its general theme is "the conflict of illusion and reality." He reaches these conclusions by examination of Swift's satire as rhetorical and verbal art and by dissection of the teller of the *Tale*. He sees that the foundation of Swift's satire here is parody used to repudiate eccentricities in language and that the concomitant twisting and torturing of meaning exposes the poverty and confusion of thought in the "modern" world where excesses in pulpit eloquence, abuses in polemical writings and veneration of the ephemeral prevail. Swift's parodies lead to witless entanglement and hopeless bewilderment, permitting the receptive reader to recognize his ironic way of juxtaposing the real and the ideal.

The vehicle entrusted to carry this baggage of rhetorical display is the teller of the *Tale* whom Mr. Paulson chooses to call "Hack." After demonstrating how the Hack overthrows the "sovereignty of the word" and how he batters and mangles rhetoric, and after noting the divarication of the Puritans and the Anglicans in their attitudes toward literary interpretation, Mr. Paulson points out that "The extent to which the *Tale* has been misread and misunderstood is perhaps indicative of the success enjoyed in the last two hundred and fifty years by Puritan assumptions, including the Ramist definition of rhetoric."

Alignment of *A Tale of a Tub* with Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* and such compendiums of errors as Thomas Edwards' *Gangraena* and Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* indicates Swift's adherence and fidelity to traditional methods of attacking the heretical speech of the Hack. Comparison with Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly* demonstrates that the Hack exposes his own stupidity in the same way Folly eulogizes folly, while juxtaposition to Cervantes' *Don Quixote* shows Don Quixote and the Hack "filled with missions they regard as man's highest duty—Quixote's to champion . . . Dulcinea, and the Hack's to champion the moderns." Madness held up to ridicule is not the whole story of *Don Quixote* but it is, says Mr. Paulson, "very largely the whole story about the *Tale of a Tub*."

The initial chapters, "The Parody of Eccentricity" and "The Quixote Theme," are not the real subjects of this book, but they are valuable preludes establishing the intellectual background of the *Tale*. What follows are two long essays in which the general theme is applied to the Gnostic and the Christian views of Man. In exploration of these views Mr. Paulson courageously and stubbornly surveys and charts a course through the very heartland of the *Tale*—the abuses of religion. The Hack's great heresy is his advocacy of the "modern's" principle that Man, independent of the past, can progress without help from the Ancients, or from anyone else. Sufficiency is at the core of the Hack's religion. While trying to create order in the modern way by asserting his sufficiency, the Hack succeeds only in compounding confusion by insisting that he can interpret the "close knots of religion" as it suits him, and can make sense out of the Gnostic jargon, "Basima eacabasa eanaa irraurista, diarba da caeotaba fobor camelanthi," the epigraph on the title page of *A Tale of a Tub* taken from Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*.

The imagination of the Hack, typically Gnostic, is evident in his interpretation of the story of Reynard the Fox and in his vision of Posterity "as a Prince and Time, his tutor, as a baby-killer who is synonymous with death." Such disintegration and destruction of meaning inevitably lead to complete collapse of all understanding of communication, and, as a result, when the Hack strains his "Faculties to their highest Stretch" to "unravel this knotty Point," the best he can produce is a handful of asterisks which he takes "to be a clear Solution of the Matter." Mr. Paulson attributes this irresponsible condition to the influence of Peter Ramus, whose Puritan followers took such extreme license with meaning that every snake became a devil and the New England wilderness the Wilderness of the ancient Hebrews.

The Gnostic movement, as Paulson understands it, separates man from his neighbors and encourages him "to secede from the human race." He points out that the "Gnostic heresy was particularly appropriate for Swift's purpose, because it not only expressed a philosophical, or at least mythical, basis for

sufficiency, but at the same time manifested the wildest examples of what sufficiency can lead to in practice." With this idea in mind, Mr. Paulson demonstrates the intensity of Swift's abhorrence of a totally sufficient world where, for example, Aeolists reinflate themselves only to produce holy belches, and the madman, self-sufficient and completely withdrawn from the rest of the human race, is satisfied to reinfund his own ordure. What may appear as scatology is in reality disgust.

Having created a *persona* "in which external reality is an image of the mind," Swift places the Hack in "a Lockean world in which external objects are the only reality" and debases him at will. With great skill Mr. Paulson develops the Christian view of Man by considering the visible and invisible churches, the Hack's battle with reality, the network of association, and the norm of the harmonious body.

No careful consideration of *A Tale of a Tub* is ever complete without facing up to the vexing problem of *The Battle of the Books* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. Mr. Paulson has dutifully performed his work. Miriam K. Starkman has suggested that *The Battle of the Books* be thought of as a chapter of the *Tale* and has dismissed *The Mechanical Operation* as "an early version of certain parts of *A Tale of a Tub*, or, more likely, as a portion of *An Analytical Discourse upon Zeal. . . .*" On the other hand, Mr. Paulson offers *The Battle of the Books* as a happy ending to the *Tale* with the Ancients' routing of the Moderns, and *The Mechanical Operation* as a coda to "the theme of the false and the true that runs through the *Tale*."

In general this book presents a conscientious, scholarly, penetrating reading of *A Tale of a Tub*. Of special worth are the two chapters dealing with the Gnostic and the Christian views of Man, which take up a difficult subject with conviction and perspicacity. Of detailed interest and value is the elaboration of the ideas of Peter Ramus. Mr. Paulson has used well the work of Father Ong and Bliss Perry, and has developed the hint Martin Price offers in his book, *Swift's Rhetorical Art*, that the Ramist influence "has not yet been adequately assessed." Father Ong's recent report that Ramus' *Quod sit unica doctrinae instituendae methodus*, translated by Eugene John Barber, is now available is welcome news. Mr. Paulson has, to use Trevor-Roper's words, dug "new channels whereby fresh and refreshing matter flows into old courses."

Until now criticism of Smollett's novels has centered about his personality, his character and his biography. The work of Lewis M. Knapp and Louis L. Martz in this area of study has been invaluable, but their criticism seems to reflect difficulty in fathoming Smollett's purpose in his vigorous, satirical, and at times, peevish work. Although the novels entertain, inform and instruct, and readily reveal their method and sources, they still leave the reader with an uneasy feeling that beneath the hurly-burly and tumultuous worlds of Peregrine Pickle, Humphry Clinker, Count Fathom and the rest there must be something more substantial than is apparent. It may be that the failure to locate the real purpose of Smollett's novels (if, indeed, there is one) is one reason why his work occupies a lesser niche in literary history than does that of Richardson, Fielding and Sterne. Anxious to elevate Smollett to a higher place, Mr. Goldberg has attempted the restoration by examining the intellectual forces at work in the novels, by relating Smollett to the Scottish Common-Sense School and finally,

by showing how each novel works out a single aspect of the intellectual and social milieu of that school whose main function has been "an effort, singular until the last decades, in reconciling a dualism inherent in Western thought since the close of the seventeenth century." He singles out from the brilliant array of Scottish thinkers Adam Ferguson, Alexander Carlyle, George Turnbull, Hugh Blair, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid to illustrate their common-sensically conciliatory approach to current opposing ideas in literature, economics, sociology and philosophy. Smollett is then brought into association with the men and ideas of this school. Thereafter, this book is a systematic, uniform study of each of the novels. In one chapter devoted to each novel, Mr. Goldberg extends the discussion of the Scottish School to account for its influence in the novel in question, establishes the dichotomy underlying the novel and then finds support for his ideas in the text, *Roderick Random* thus becomes a study in reason and passion; *Peregrine Pickle*, a study in imagination and judgment; *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, a study in art and nature; *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, a study in social- and self-love; and *Humphry Clinker*, a study in primitivism and progress. Through this neat arrangement Mr. Goldberg desires to lift Smollett's novels to an intellectual level they have never heretofore enjoyed.

Such a prosperous outline of a new approach to the work of Smollett, however, falls far short of the mark and must be considered only as a preliminary probing to discover Smollett's purpose and to align him with his more famous contemporaries. Mr. Goldberg's basic premise has not been firmly established. His excessive use of qualifying phrases reflects an uncertainty about Smollett's association with the Scottish School. For example, this excerpt is typical. The italics are those of this reviewer.

> Smollett *appears to have enjoyed some degree* of intimacy with most of the Scottish literary lights. It is *usually assumed* that the Edinburgh letters of July 15 and August 18 in *Humphry Clinker* contain much that is autobiographical, . . .
>
> We *can only conjecture* as to the validity of the autobiographical in *Humphry Clinker*, but we *can state with reasonable assurance* and despite the paucity of actual autobiographical evidence that Smollett was well within this "hot-bed of genius."

Aware of the weakness of his statements, Mr. Goldberg shifts ground by observing that "it is less than relevant to wonder whether Smollett actually read the works of the Scottish group, or whether conversations with them were of an intellectual nature," and adds that "it is sufficient to note that he emerged from the same force erupting in Scotland which produced an Adam Smith, a Hugh Blair, or an Adam Ferguson." But even this divagation fails to convince because many of the Scottish works to which he alludes were published after Smollett's first three novels had appeared. For example, Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* came out in 1759; Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism*, in 1762; Dr. Reid's *Inquiry*, in 1764; and Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, in 1783. On the other hand, Smollett's novels appeared in 1748, 1751, 1753, 1760-1 and 1771.

By the severe limitations of his own making, Mr. Goldberg, uncomfortably confined and cramped, is forced to strain the limits of his ingenuity to squeeze

each novel into its narrow frame. In his preface, he seems to belatedly note this difficulty, but it is, of course, too late to remake the text. Two examples out of many may suffice to illustrate the problem.

Ferdinand Count Fathom is considered as a study in art and nature. To bolster the argument that Smollett intended to describe Count Fathom in terms of art, Mr. Goldberg resorts to ferreting out such phrases as "artful politician," "artful traitor," "artful serpent," "artful incendiary" and "artful Fathom." On the same basis a similar case could be built for *Peregrine Pickle* simply by noting that in Volume I, Chapter LXIII, the heading begins with these words: "Peregrine artfully foments a Quarrel. . . ." *Humphry Clinker*, a study in primitivism and the idea of progress, according to Mr. Goldberg, merits special attention because of Smollett's use of sartorism. To this end he considers Dutton's fancy finery and Clinker's ripped breeches symbols, and finds symbolic significance in the semi-nudity of Win Jenkins when she dropped her petticoat and when she had to jump from the burning inn on a moonlight night—"and a fresh breeze of wind blowing, none of Mrs. Winifred's beauties could possibly escape the view of the fortunate Clinker, whose heart was not able to withstand the united force of so many charms." When Mr. Goldberg compares the novel on this score with *King Lear*, *A Tale of a Tub* and *Sartor Resartus*, he is in a lamentably weak position.

Smollett's works may turn out to be much more than picaresque or busconesque novels and yield even more than what Professors Martz and Knapp have already found, but Mr. Goldberg does not have the key in this book. Within the narrow limitations of a single formula, he has written a challenging and interesting book, but neither a conclusive nor a convincing one. Deeper study of the ideas of the members of the Scottish Common-Sense School and accumulation of more factual evidence to associate Smollett with this group are needed before the argument herein presented is acceptable.

S. A. GOLDEN

Wayne State University

The Idea of Poetry in France by Margaret Gilman. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958. Pp. xi + 324. $6.00.

The Writer's Way in France by Robert Greer Cohn. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960. Pp. 447. $5.00.

The Idea of Poetry in France, by the late Margaret Gilman, retraces the death and rebirth of French poetry from Malherbe to Baudelaire. Her account bears at once on poetical productions and contemporary criticism during that period. The concept of imagination is the main idea stressed throughout her study.

In the 16th century, imagination was the sacred fire which conferred immortality on the poet. With Ronsard, it went under the name of invention: "the work of an imagination which conceives the idea and forms of all imaginable things." From the middle of the 17th century onward, the strong social pressure, the worldly spirit, brought poetry down from Parnassus to the salons. Its aim became

moral instruction and pleasure. At first controlled by reason, poetry was finally absorbed by it. To Voltaire himself it was nothing else than "the ornament of reason." Strangely enough, much was written on poetry and the lack of real inspiration was often deplored; but the French critics, generally influenced by English sensationalism, considered imagination as decaying sense and associated that faculty with memory. At the most, they conceded that imagination could be "compounded" and bring together various elements retained by memory.

Diderot alone had enough vision to envisage a poetry worthy of that name. Yet, while his theory of memory anticipates that of Bergson and Proust, imagination to him is still the art of rearranging elements found in memory. It is only through his stress on suggestion, the mysterious rapports which he finds embodied in metaphors, his theory of the analogy between images and sentiments, his stress on rhythm, harmony and sound, that Diderot anticipates Poe and Baudelaire. From numerous quotations from the critics of the time, we understand that while imagination holds a greater and greater place in poetical theory, this faculty retains its ties with memory. In the meantime, poetry remains uninspired. In despair, many critics come to think that the real poetic spirit will have to express itself in French prose which, all considered, does not essentially differ from poetry. Chénier praises enthusiasm but does not distinguish it from emotion; only in Joubert does imagination appear as "the aptitude for perceiving things invisible."

It was not criticism that brought about the regeneration of poetry but the influence of the illuminists. This influence is felt in Madame de Staël's conception of a "poetry fraught with emotion, enthusiasm, and imagery, possessed of a mysterious, even mystical, quality," such as she had found in German romanticism.

It took a long time for the romantic revolution to bring that quality to the fore. Three major trends are distinguished in French romanticism: the conception of poetry as a spontaneous overflow of emotion, the revival of poetry as art, and "an increasing sense of poetry as a special and mysterious experience" due in large part to the influence of the illuminist tradition. Those trends appear separately in the romantic poets before fusing in Baudelaire.

With Baudelaire, imagination is at last enthroned. The basis of his poetry is his own experience, which is also that of his "hypocrite lecteur." Only partly does he follow Gautier's notion of Art, Poe's stress on composition. In his own way, he believes in the supreme morality of art but that is because real poetry is always "opposed to facts, always in revolt, always a negation of evil." Margaret Gilman's treatment of Baudelairean aesthetics is, in our opinion, one of the best published so far. She mentions Baudelaire's indebtedness to Poe in so far as the transcendental character of beauty is concerned but she also stresses Baudelaire's particular notion of the double character of beauty: "all forms of beauty, like all possible phenomena, contain an eternal element and a transitory one—an absolute element and a particular one." Absolute beauty does not exist and Baudelaire's is the "multiform and multicolored beauty which moves in the infinite spirals of life." The variable element is found in the world of the poet. This is the source of the poet's "modernity." The transcendental world must fuse in the poet's vision with his own fleeting world. One of the functions of the imagination is the discovery of *correspondences* between the two, whether in

the form of synesthesia or of vertical correspondences. Imagination is no longer with Baudelaire the faculty of forming images of reality; it is the faculty of forming images that go beyond reality. It is the queen of truth, and the *possible* is one of the provinces of the truth.

Margaret Gilman's work supplies a very well documented account of what happened to the idea of poetry in France while poetry itself went underground during the Age of Reason, as well as a detailed history of its rebirth. It also provides along the way an account of the evolution of the concept of imagination, a subject far more neglected until now in French than in English literary history.

In *The Writer's Way in France*, Professor Cohn applies to the history of French literature the Post-Hegelian form of criticism which he had already used in his work on Mallarmé. His dialectical method is grounded on the Kierkegaardian paradox rather than on Hegelian logic. This means that oppositions are considered as taking place in the mind of the writer rather than on a purely historical plane. The fundamental problem for him is therefore that of creativity.

In Part I, the creative temperament is defined as a certain "lag" in the rhythm of human life. This lag is due to the damming up of a daemonic energy, release of which takes the form of artistic expression. The writer reveals new values or festering sores (hence a poetry of light and a poetry of darkness), but whatever human experience he may bring to the light of consciousness, the process is one of negating, because consciousness always involves a certain detachment from its object. By reason of his otherness, the writer has to discover his identity and liberate himself from contemporary society through literary embodiment of myths and archetypes.

In Parts II and III, the method is applied to the evolution of French literature, then to specific authors illustrating various moments of that evolution. "Expression always comes about via the negation of the unexpressed, which, in relation to intellectual man, we call 'nature'." Without going into the process of symbolization itself, Professor Cohn defines the symbolic meaning of the elements: light and air correspond to the male vision of heaven; water to the "eternal in feminine, undulant, caressing presence of the all." The divinization of nature is followed by that of trees, flowers, beasts, the blood cult, the cult of animals. The next phase is that of bondless love for the parent, a love which, once thwarted, gives rise to the adult Persons of religion and to the imaginary beings of fairydom.

Thus, in certain passages of the *Roland*, we already find a combination of "the love of the father (powerful, saintly Charlemagne), the homoerotic (the sentimental combat of Roland and Olivier), and the love of animals, blood and nature. . . ." Marking a step forward, *Tristan*, with its opening hunting scene, is interpreted as the search for the father by the lost, disinherited prince. The opening of *Perceval* mingles the adoration of nature with the yearning for the missing father symbolized by the full-fledged knights whom the young Perceval mistakes for angels. Perceval's quest is that of Stephen Dedalus: "to forge in the smithy of his soul the conscience of his race." The fact that Perceval was brought up by a woman marks the influence of woman which from then on is to dominate French literature. As a literary theme, the sea appears together with

the cult of woman. Woman, for the adolescent mediaeval mind, is both angel and prostitute. The Neo-Platonism of the Renaissance confirms that polarity but the unavoidable reaction soon brings back, with firm and solid institutions, in the works of the Protestant poets and in Catholic poets of the Counter-Reformation, the image of the Hebraic Father.

With Montaigne, the writer's vocation becomes enlightened. The polarity of Montaigne's youthful stoicism and of his scepticism yields to the values of life. In the dualism of Descartes, "the enlightened vocation again strongly hints at its schizophrenic or paranoiac underside. . . ." Yet, gradually, Descartes gravitates toward the empirical and the Social.

As we progress through the literary survey, we note that each period is characterized by a double polarity. In the 18th century, the horizontal axis of "love of mankind" replaces the vertical axis of "love of God." In Rousseau, these are merged as "rigid male doctrine" on one side, and, on the other, a "feminine suppleness in dialectical contortions." With the suffering occasioned by the Revolution, a further dissolution of spiritual barriers is encouraged by a new wave of mysticism. "Vertical synesthesia" meets in Baudelaire with "horizontal synesthesia." This extends the writer's awareness of the cosmos. "The vertical dialectic, a modality of the daemonic rhythm of all creativity, is complemented by a horizontal one between the main branches of culture: between art and society, adding realism . . . and between art and science. . . ." Literature preserves its elementary themes but these are constantly enriched by a dialectical process tending to enlarge human experience.

The studies on French Symbolism, included in Part IV together with detailed analysis of some mediaeval works, aim at revealing this enrichment. Rimbaud appears as "a modern Perceval, deprived, by divorce, of a father and further exposed to the neglect or the stings of an unfeminine, harshly dutiful mother." Rimbaud's is an exemplary creative temperament, at odds with society, in quest of his identity, in quest of his missing father symbolized by the sun. In Proust, the need to rediscover oneself grew more slowly, thanks to a favorable family atmosphere, and the lag which is the source of creativity was more protracted. Yet Proust was also at odds with society and with himself because of his excessive emotional rhythm. His yearning for purity expresses itself through predilection for the ethereal elements, light and air; water is intimately apprehended "in the airy delicate form" of "rain falling gently in the garden." The sea appears to him "typically veiled in his urbane delicacy, glimpsed through the scintillating play of light and impressionistic forms of flowers and girls scattered about the lawned terraces of the summer hotel on the beach. The refinement involves a rich simultaneity, a complexity such as we find building in the deep harmonies and polytonality of Debussy. . . ." Proust's frustrated adoration for his mother is diverted "to the advantage of the pink hawthorne blossoms. . . ." As in Perceval's or Rimbaud's case, the keynote of the father to son relationship is absence; yet the image of the father appears in a stained-glass Gothic window in the form of a solitary figure, described by Proust as "that of a King of cards, who lived up there, . . . between heaven and earth . . . ," suggesting the "Sad King" of Rouault.

The very complexity of a method which combines with a wealth of erudition the resources of phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and anthropology makes it

difficult at times to follow the dialectical movement which Professor Cohn wants to bring out. His survey suffers from the difficulties inherent in the use of existential analysis on the historical plane. His interpretations seem somewhat overcharged with Freudian meanings. With him, the sketch of the writer's personality is, in our opinion, more brilliant than the historical development, the treatment of a given work better than that of the writer, the aesthetic analysis of given passages or poems even better. He is at his best when he succeeds in dissociating the various elements which constitute the unique impression produced on us by the writer's art: "the sunniness and clear-patterned, tapestrylike *métier*" of a Rondeau by Charles d'Orléans, the baroque chiaroscuro in Andromaque's description of the sack of Troy, the Monet-like impressionist atmospheres in Proust. In such brief evocations, the critic actually helps us to understand through his own creativity, reinforcing, in true Baudelairean fashion, our aesthetic emotion with intellectual pleasure, without undermining the integrity of the work of art.

J. L. SALVAN

Wayne State University

Mark Twain and Huck Finn by Walter Blair. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960. Pp. xi + 436. $7.50.

Of the four major publications based on the Mark Twain Papers in the Huntington Library: Dixon Wecter, *Mark Twain to Mrs. Fairbanks* (San Marino, 1949), *Sam Clemens of Hannibal* (Boston, 1952); Henry Nash Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959); and Walter Blair, *Mark Twain and Huck Finn* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), Professor Blair's is the most significant. Not only the collection in the Huntington, but that of the Berg in the New York Public Library, and several other university and private manuscript holdings, besides all available printed material, have been laid under contribution for this work. It is safe to say that no important manuscript or printed item has escaped Professor Blair's keen eye. Passages from the notebooks are judiciously chosen, allowing the reader to watch Twain's mind in the process of creation: for example, "Put in thing from Boy-lecture"; "You go and tell Mr. Smith that I wouldn't come down to see the Twelve Apostles"; "I never had such a fight over a book in my life before." Some of the colorful Twain language has rubbed off on the usually crisp and straightforward style of this critic: "Remembering the way a steamboat tore into a raft now and then . . . he had one come looming out of the gray thick night in his novel"; and "In further imagining the way Mark would blister with a blast anyone who engaged in such sentimentering, I managed to refrain."

The book's title does not give a fair idea of its broad expanse. It provides abundant biographical detail (for the most part relevant) concerning Twain's mature life—before, during, and after writing *Huck*. The outlines of the warm, human, sometimes irascible personality which emerged from Edward Wagenknecht's *Mark Twain: The Man and His Work* (New Haven, 1935) are not

materially altered, but they are deepened and extended, particularly in respect to the long continued and mutually productive friendship with William Dean Howells. There is a parallel, both in sensitiveness and range, between Blair's pen portrait and Hal Holbrook's dramatic representation of Mark Twain.

This book includes criticism of all Twain's major works, as well as of numerous short stories and essays. We are not disappointed in our expectation of what this pioneer in the study of American humor would do in dredging the reservoir of Twain's anecdotes. Among the many debts which Twain owes to such writers of humor and local color as Shillaber, Longstreet, and Harris, the cooperation with William Wright [Dan De Quille] is a new, fascinating story. On the trail of the English and European borrowings, first blazed by Minnie Brashear in 1934 and marked with additional signposts by a dozen scholars since, Professor Blair has pointed out the influence of Carlyle, Charles Reade, and Poe. His study of Twain's notations in Horace W. Fuller's *Impostors and Adventurers* (1882) is impressive, but should doubtless be supplemented by the earlier articles on Eleazer Williams, claimant for "the Lost Dauphin," in *Putnam's Magazine* (1853-54), which Twain and many other mid-Western readers certainly saw when they came out. The most interesting part of "The Literary Flux" is the interpretation of the impact on Twain of Lecky's *History of European Morals*, first indicated by Chester Davis in *The Twainian* (1956). In discussing earlier and contemporary influences, Professor Blair exemplifies the sage advice of John L. Lowes: that the critic should show not only where a writer got his material, but also what he did with it.

On the moot point of censorship by Livy Clemens and William Dean Howells, the author follows Wagenknecht's lead in the view that Clemens himself knew he needed "civilizing," and he supports this by additional evidence. One of the rare instances in which Professor Blair is taken in by Clemens' occasional lapses from good taste is his admiration for "the handsomest mansion in Hartford," which, Blair says, "shone brilliantly even among the splendid dwellings of the opulent city." It does not seem likely that the Hartford eye, accustomed to the classic design of Bulfinch's State House, and the Wadsworth and Sigourney mansions (only three outstanding examples), would consider Clemens' home anything but a Gothic monstrosity. In fact, there may well be satire in the *Hartford Times*' description of the house, with its elaborate statement of measurements and enumeration of rooms; and doubtless the house was reproduced in *Harper's Magazine* because of its author's fame rather than its own elegance. However smug about it, Clemens described the structure aptly as "one of the gaudiest effects I ever instigated." This desire for promotion is nevertheless brilliantly demonstrated in Chapter 25, "Publication," which shows how ingeniously Clemens could push his own work; twentieth-century Madison Avenue might well study this account.

The concluding chapter, "Hucka, Khŏk, Hunckle, Gekkelberri," shows definitively how extensive has been the circulation of *Huck Finn* in both Americas, Europe, and the Orient. However significant these statistics on publication, it seems to this reviewer that the last chapter of a book so rich in new material and in critical insight should present an evaluation of *Huck Finn* as an artistic unit. In view of the number of critical articles on the subject of the book's overall structure (those by Richard P. Adams, Leo Marx, and William Van O'Connor

represent only a segment of this criticism, all of which is cited in the Notes and Bibliography), one might well look to Professor Blair's book for a conclusive statement on this much discussed and important point. Professor Blair has, however, provided all the information needed for such an analysis. To scholars of American literature, *Mark Twain and Huck Finn* is indispensable; and it will also provide enjoyment for the average reader.

VIVIAN C. HOPKINS

College of Education, Albany
State University of New York

Myth and Mythmaking, ed. Henry A. Murray. New York: George Braziller, 1960. Pp. 381. $6.00.

Recent criticism evinces an absorption in mythology which rivals earlier vogues in source-tracing and symbol-chasing. But while some commentators approximate those curious exegeses that propounded parallels between, say, Huck Finn and Dante, the change in critical focus has been for the most part healthful. Professor Murray's collection of fine essays, several of which were garnered from *Daedalus*, serves as ample testimony.

In "Some Meanings of Myth" Harry Levin discusses the semantic confusion that shrouds the subject. The word has been used so broadly as to lose its strict historical relevance. Perhaps "modern myth" is indeed a contradiction in terms, although Henry Hatfield cogently analyzes "The Myth of Nazism" while Andrew Lytle writes informatively of "The Working Novelist and the Myth-making Process." Today myths are as seemingly omnipresent as symbols were not long ago. Thus Herbert Weisinger makes "An Examination of Myth and Ritual Approach to Shakespeare," and although his essay is provocative, one shudders at the thought of professional journals bulging with studies of the "myth" in Balzac and Dickens or perhaps Dumas and Scott. The dangers are apparent. Levin has them in mind when he insists on critics clarifying their terms and even stating their assumptions before proceeding on the perilous journey through mythology. The mythological method, if such it may be called, turns upon two questions which Levin posits but does not resolve: first, whether the ontogeny of the dream really recapitulates the phylogeny of myth; second, whether the poet can manufacture his own "personal" mythology. Perhaps these questions are ultimately unanswerable, but hypothetical resolutions are necessary for any meaningful discussion of the mythological element in literature.

Yet mythology, strictly speaking, is more the province of the anthropologist and the sociologist than of the man of letters, and to some extent they seem to resent literary intrusion into their domain. Their reaction is understandable although partisan. In "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking" Clyde Kluckhohn argues that, while common motifs characterize various cultures, it is dangerous to over-simplify. Phyllis Ackerman documents such an error in "Stars and Stories"—that of Alfred Jeremias, a German orientalist, whose obsession with the solar zodiac as the masterkey was legendary. Richard M. Dorson is even more explicit and acid in "Theories of Myth and the Folklorist." He tears

into psychoanalytical theories and attacks Campbell's universal monomyth. Dorson typifies the criticism of the professional folklorist.

Nevertheless Joseph Campbell's "The Historical Development of Mythology" emerges as the outstanding essay in the entire collection. Despite occasional errors which anthropologists and folklorists hasten to point out, Campbell displays an immense erudition on their own terms. He is capable of minute analysis in anthropological matters, though committing himself to a Jungian belief in archetypes. Most importantly, at least to my mind, he is a synthesist, a system-builder: he sees all mythology, despite time or clime, as a variation of the universal monomyth of the hero who overcomes obstacles to achieve his goal. This may be an extreme position (expounded at length in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and his in-progress *Masks of God*), of course, and has certainly provoked frontal assault. Campbell is bound to make errors, like Spengler, Toynbee, Hegel, or any other system-builder, for it is impossible not to err with some particulars in such a gigantic super-structure. But Campbell, as in this essay, has two qualities which folklorists generally lack: first, he remains by conviction a synthesist who incorporates the part, analysis, into the whole, synthesis, while most of his colleagues content themselves with statistics and frequency-counts of myth. Second, he has a grand poetic vision and his style, like Frazer's in *The Golden Bough*, is itself a monumental contribution. It is a Campbell, not a dispassionate folklorist, who ultimately captures not only the layman's but also the specialist's imagination. This fact, while not all-important, is still significant.

In his own conclusion to the anthology, "The Possible Nature of a 'Mythology' to Come," Professor Murray is eclectic, though with effort, and attempts to utilize the various approaches to mythology. He favors the broad interpretation of mythology and tends rather more towards Campbell than towards Dorson. His psychoanalytical orientation is evident but not intrusive. Subtle, sophisticated, rigorously logical, the essay reads like a chapter from a positivist's handbook.

Thus *Myth and Mythmaking* is an invaluable compilation for both novice and student. In no other book is the subject of myth and its relationship to literature so ably presented; nowhere else, in such a limited space, are the antipodal positions so clearly defined. The bibliographical footnotes are extensive and seductive. Hence the book superbly achieves its goal by irresistibly tempting the reader to other, more exhaustive and specialized works in this fascinating field.

GEORGE ROSS RIDGE

Georgia State College

The Style of Don Juan by George M. Ridenour. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960. Pp. xiv + 168. $4.00.

Professor Ernest J. Lovell, one of the best contemporary critics of Byron, has observed that "prevailing taste and present critical theory are often inimical to and inadequately prepared to deal with the long poem of conversational tone."

Lovell's own essay, "Irony and Image in *Don Juan*," * is an important step toward providing us a critical stance from which to view, particularly, *Don Juan* as a unified, carefully wrought work (the superb *Variorum Don Juan*, of course, proves beyond doubt—if indeed it still needs proving—that a conscious artist was at work here). George M. Ridenour's *The Style of Don Juan* takes us even further in this same direction—for it provides not only the "stance" but the variety of critical perceptions with which to inform that stance.

Ridenour sets out to show that "in spite of its insistent casualness" *Don Juan* "makes its point with . . . single-minded perseverance"—and that point is the revelation of a "central paradox" underlying Byron's universe. To Byron the elements of this universe, Ridenour says, "are in their different ways both means of grace and occasions of sin," and art itself is both a consequence of the Fall, a part of the taint of original sin, and an embodiment of high human values, civilization's way of contending with and rising above a fallen nature. Whether or not one agrees with the particulars of this (and I confess that I am at best only moderately persuaded), one must recognize, I think, the fundamental value of Ridenour's method. It proceeds from the isolation of two organizing themes (the Christian myth of the Fall and the classical rhetorical theory of styles) and an analysis of the persona, the speaker of the poem. If the former is somewhat startling, the latter certainly is not. But Ridenour does considerably more than characterize the persona. He sees him in constant and complex relation to the protagonist of the poem, so that the entire narrative becomes a tension-filled, richly paradoxical "developing *dramatic* action" (from what Ridenour calls "innocence" to "experience"), rather than a series of more-or-less loosely connected episodes, digressions, lyrics, descriptions, some brilliant, some not.

In this way the striking wholeness of *Don Juan* evolves, an elaborately coherent vision of a poet of considerable imaginative integrity, a synthesis impossible of achievement in isolated studies of the character of Don Juan, of the epic details, of the targets of the satire, of the imagery, or even of the various "themes."

Yet the book is not large; it does not attempt to fill out the vision. Its value, and it is a substantial value indeed, lies in its richly complex point of view toward "style," which enables us to see Byron's style not only as a reflection of, but also as a fittingly rhetor-poetical embodiment of, his *Weltanschauung*. As I say, one does not have to agree with Ridenour's particular interpretation; and each reader will sense the strains which result from trying to accommodate certain details of *Don Juan* to Byron's "stance." Yet, if we are ever to read Byron fully, we need to realize that along with the other great Romantics, and despite his hatred of "systems," he knew he had to create a system or "be enslav'd by another man's" (as Blake so aptly put it). And to perceive the style of the system, to see *Don Juan* (and a number of other poems, indeed) aright, Ridenour has taught us that we must erect a critical and exegetical "structure" (or establish a "system of relationships") that will "correspond in a . . . conceptual way to Byron's imaginative construction."

ROBERT F. GLECKNER

Wayne State University

* *The Major Romantic Poets: A Symposium in Reappraisal*, ed. Clarence D. Thorpe, Carlos Baker, and Bennett Weaver (Carbondale, 1957), pp. 228-246.